

**REPORT ON**  
**THE 2011 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**  
**FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8**  
**FOR THE**  
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Arlington Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to carry out the tabulation and an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which had been implemented with students in grades 6 through 8. This survey was based on one developed specifically for middle school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 87 questions. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, illegal drug use, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior (grades 7 and 8 only), body weight, self-image, and physical activity.

## **SURVEY PROCESS**

It was agreed that the survey would be administered to all students in attendance from grades 6, 7, and 8 on the agreed upon date. The survey was administered simultaneously to all students on June 8, 2011 by professional staff during the first period of the school day. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and were given the option to exempt their child from the survey. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to all students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 981 students who responded to the survey, 323 from grade 6, 327 from grade 7, and 329 from grade 8. There were 480 females and 501 males who responded to the survey. Two students did not indicate their grade.

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender, and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented in percentages under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

## **OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from the Arlington Public Schools. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group, and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 87 questions, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results, to offer comparisons by grade and gender, as well as comparisons with the results of the Arlington YRBS which was completed in March of 2009. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the Arlington Public Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

It should be noted that some of the questions in the current survey were not asked in 2009 and the wording of other questions and/or responses has changed. As a result, in those cases comparisons to the results of 2009 and before cannot be drawn.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6, 7, 8**

**SAFETY**

- **3.4%** of all respondents (2.3% - 2009) **report “not at all” or “hardly ever” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car** (grade 6 – 2.4%, grade 7 – 3.7%, and grade 8 – 3.6%). Males (4.4%) were more likely to report doing so than were females (2.5%).
- **More than one-fifth (23.3%)** of all respondents (24.2% - 2009) **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle**. Respondents from grade 6 (13.3%) were less likely to never or rarely wear a bicycle helmet than those from grade 7 (25.4%) or grade 8 (30.7%). Males (28.8%) were more likely to not wear a bicycle helmet than were females (17.5%).
- **12.7%** of all respondents **report having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol at least once during the prior thirty days**. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 8 (grade 6 – 11.3%, grade 7 – 10.8%, grade 8 – 15.7%). There was no variation by gender.
- **One respondent in six (16.3%) reports having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication of any kind during the previous twelve months**. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 6 (grade 6 – 18.0%, grade 7 – 14.7%, and grade 8 – 16.4%). Females (19.8%) report this experience more frequently than males (13.0%). Further, 7.2% of all respondents report doing so to someone else.

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **4.5%** of all respondents (2.7% - 2009) **report having ever carried a gun (other than supervised shooting or hunting)** (grade 6 – 6.5%, grade 7 – 1.8%, grade 8 – 4.9%) (females – 3.3%, males – 5.6%).
- **5.5%** of all respondents **report having ever carried any type of weapon such as a gun, knife, or club to school during the school day**. Males, especially those in grade 8, report having done so more frequently than females. Further, 2.7% of all respondents report doing so during the previous 30 days.

**“Have you ever carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club to school during the school day?”**

**“Yes”**

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	2.6%	2.3%	2.5%
<b>7</b>	1.8%	8.9%	5.2%
<b>8</b>	1.9%	14.2%	8.2%
<b>Total</b>	2.1%	8.8%	5.5%

- **35.3%** of all respondents (40.2% - 2009) **report having had their property stolen or deliberately damaged on school property during school time on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey**. The incidence of this experience was slightly higher in grade 8 (grade 6 – 32.5%, grade 7 – 34.4%, grade 8 – 38.9%). There was little variation by gender (females – 32.9%, males – 37.6%).
- **18.8%** of all respondents **report having been threatened, humiliated or experienced hostile behaviors from others on their way to or from school during the previous twelve months**. Further, **one-fourth (26.2%)** of all respondents **report having had this experience on school property during the school day**. The experience of being bullied during the school day in the previous twelve months was slightly lower among respondents from grade 6 (23.9%) than among those from grade 7 (27.6%) or grade 8 (27.2%). There was very little variation by gender. Additionally, **7.7% report doing so to others on the way to or from school** and **10.9% report doing so to others during the school day**.
- **One respondent in eight (12.5%)** (8.5% - 2009) **reports having ever hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises)**. There was little variation by grade (grade 6 – 12.1%, grade 7 – 11.4%, grade 8 – 14.1%). Female respondents (16.8%) report such self-injury twice as often as males (8.4%).

SUICIDE

- **16.8%** of all respondents (9.3% - 2009) **report having ever seriously thought about committing suicide** and **6.3%** (3.5% - 2009) **report having ever made a plan to do so**. The incidence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 14.0%, grade 7 – 17.0%, grade 8 – 19.5%). Female respondents (20.5%) report having done so more frequently than males (13.3%).
- **4.4%** of all respondents (2.5% - 2009) **report having ever tried to commit suicide**. There was little variation by grade.

**“Have you ever tried to kill yourself?”**

**“Yes”**

	<u><b>Female</b></u>	<u><b>Male</b></u>	<u><b>Total</b></u>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	3.3%	4.1%	3.7%
<b>7</b>	6.1%	1.9%	4.0%
<b>8</b>	6.3%	4.8%	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	5.2%	3.6%	4.4%
<b>2009</b>	3.5%	1.5%	2.5%

TOBACCO USE

- **7.2%** of all respondents (3.4% - 2009) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking** (even just a puff) and **3.4%** of all respondents **report having done so for the first time before the age of 12.** The incidence of those having ever tried cigarette smoking was highest in grade 8 (grade 6 – 3.7%, grade 7 – 5.5%, grade 8 – 11.9%). Males (9.4%) were more likely to have ever done so than were females (4.8%).
- **2.1%** of all respondents (1.5% - 2009) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** There was very little variation by gender.
- **97.6%** of all respondents (98.4% - 2009) **report that their parents would feel it would be “wrong” or “very wrong” for them to smoke cigarettes.** There was no variation by grade or gender in this perception.

## ALCOHOL USE

- **Two-thirds (67.9%)** of all respondents (71.0% - 2009) **report having never had a drink of alcohol, other than a sip and/or other than for religious reasons** (grade 6 – 76.6%, grade 7 – 68.9%, grade 8 – 58.6%). Further, 18.3% of all respondents (17.7% - 2009) report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 12.
- **8.2%** of all respondents (9.5% - 2009) **report having had a drink of alcohol more than a few sips, at least once during the previous thirty days.** The incidence of recent alcohol use increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 4.0%, grade 7 – 9.8%, grade 8 – 10.4%). There was no variation by gender.
- **7.8%** of all respondents (3.8% - 2009) **report having ever been drunk** (grade 6 – 4.4%, grade 7 – 5.6%, grade 8 – 12.8%). There was little variation by gender.
- **6.9%** of all respondents (5.6% - 2009) **report having attended parties held in homes in their town where alcohol use by teens is allowed, either occasionally or frequently** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior increased slightly each year by grade (grade 6 – 5.5%, grade 7 – 6.5%, grade 8 – 8.5%). There was no variation by gender.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 16% believed that over half of their peers had done so and another 21% (total 37%) believed that over one-quarter had done so. In fact, 8% of all respondents actually report having used alcohol during the previous month.**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **7.9%** of all respondents (2.8% - 2009) **report having ever used marijuana.** 8<sup>th</sup> grade respondents (15.0%) were much more likely to have done so than were those from grade 6 (3.1%) or grade 7 (4.9%) (females – 6.5%, males – 9.3%). Further, 2.0% of all respondents (0.4% - 2009) report having first done so before the age of 12 and 4.6% (1.5% - 2009) report using marijuana during the previous month.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 21.0% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so.** In fact, **4.6%** of all respondents actually report having used marijuana during the previous month.
- **One respondent in eight (12.3%) (9.6% - 2009) reports having ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high.** The incidence of the lifetime use of inhalants varied very little by grade.

**“Have you ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?”**

**“Yes”**

	<u><b>Female</b></u>	<u><b>Male</b></u>	<u><b>Total</b></u>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	9.9%	15.8%	13.0%
<b>7</b>	13.8%	10.1%	12.0%
<b>8</b>	12.5%	11.2%	11.9%
<b>Total</b>	12.1%	12.4%	12.3%
<b>2009</b>	7.2%	12.2%	9.6%

- **15.4%** of all respondents (13.1% - 2009) **report that there is someone in their family whose drinking or drug use bothers them.**
- **8.0%** of all respondents (6.2% - 2009) **report having ever been sold or offered drugs on school property.** The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 2.2%, grade 7 – 6.5%, grade 8 – 15.2%). Male respondents (10.8%) report this experience more frequently than females (5.0%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **80.3%** of all respondents (87.9% - 2009) **report having ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school** (grade 6 – 62.6%, grade 7 – 82.0%, grade 8 – 95.7%). There was no variation by gender.
- **58.1%** of all respondents (51.0% - 2009) **report that they have not ever spoken about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents/guardians or other adults in their family.** There was very little or no variation by grade or gender.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR (GRADES 7 AND 8 ONLY)

- **5.2%** of all respondents (5.1% - 2009) **report having ever had sexual intercourse** (grade 7 – 3.7%, grade 8 – 6.4%). Males (6.4%) report ever doing so slightly more frequently than females (4.0%).
- **One respondent in ten (10.0%)** (6.5% - 2009) **reports having ever participated in oral sex either given or received** (grade 7 – 7.8%, grade 8 – 11.7%). There was very little variation by gender.
- **8.0%** of all respondents (6.3% - 2009) **report that they have ever been involved in sexual intercourse or sexual touching against their will** (grade 7 – 5.9%, grade 8 – 9.8%). Females (10.7%) report this experience twice as frequently as males (5.2%).
- **42.4%** of all respondents (37.5% - 2009) **report that they have never talked about sex with their parents/guardians or other adults in their family**. There was no variation by grade. Male respondents (46.6%) report not having such conversations more frequently than females (38.2%).
- **One respondent in eight (12.2%)** reports having sent or received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”) during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 7 – 8.6%, grade 8 – 15.1%). There was no variation by gender.

## DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- **13.8%** of all respondents (8.9% - 2009) **report that they are concerned about their weight either “most of the time” or “always”** (grade 6 – 10.2%, grade 7 – 14.8%, grade 8 – 16.2%). Females (20.5%) report this concern much more frequently than males (7.4%).
- **8.1%** of all respondents (6.3% - 2009) **report having ever vomited, starved themselves, taken laxatives, diet drinks, or pills to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight.** The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 5.1%, grade 7 – 7.8%, grade 8 – 11.5%) and was much higher among females (females – 13.2%, males – 3.3%).
- During the seven days prior to the survey:
  - **10.7%** of all respondents (14.4% - 2009) **report having had a drink of soda (not diet), flavored punch, sports drinks, sweetened iced-tea, or other fruit-flavored drinks at least once a day.**
  - **46.8%** of all respondents (48.5% - 2009) **report having eaten fresh fruit at least once a day.**
  - **25.1%** of all respondents (29.7% - 2009) **report having had a drink of 100% fruit juice at least once a day.**
- **Over one-half (54.7%)** of all respondents (55.2% - 2009) **report having one or more drinks with caffeine in them on an average school day** (grade 6 – 48.6%, grade 7 – 58.3%, grade 8 – 56.8%). There was no variation by gender.
- **Nearly one-fourth (23.7%)** of all respondents **report eating breakfast on fewer than five days during the week before the survey** (grade 6 – 18.3%, grade 7 – 26.0%, grade 8 – 26.5%). There was very little variation by gender.

SELF-IMAGE AND STRESS

- **5.8%** of all respondents (3.1% - 2009) **report that they fit in with people their own age either “not at all” or “hardly ever”**. There was very little variation by grade (grade 6 – 6.4%, grade 7 – 5.1%, grade 8 – 5.9%) and no variation by gender.
- **9.4%** of all respondents (4.9% - 2009) **report that they worry that they are not good at anything either “most of the time” or “always”**. Respondents from grade 6 report this perception least often (grade 6 – 8.1%, grade 7 – 9.1%, grade 8 – 11.0%) and female respondents (12.7%) do so twice as often as males (6.2%).
- **Nearly one-quarter (24.3%)** of all respondents (19.2% - 2009) **report that they are under too much stress or pressure either “most of the time” or “always”**. This perception increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 16.4%, grade 7 – 24.1%, grade 8 – 32.3%) (females – 30.0%, males – 18.9%). Further, respondents **report that the sources of the greatest amount of pressure in their lives are: teachers (28.8%), myself (24.9%), and parents/guardians (16.0%)**.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **84.9%** of all respondents (89.7% - 2009) **report having exercised or moved their body quickly (outside of Physical Education) on at least three occasions during the seven days prior to the survey.** The incidence of such regular exercise was lowest in grade 8 (grade 6 – 85.6%, grade 7 – 87.6%, grade 8 – 81.6%) (females – 82.9%, males – 86.7%).
- **48.5%** of all respondents (44.3% - 2009) **report that they do not think that there are enough games and activities offered through the school activities program to meet their needs and interest** (grade 6 – 43.7%, grade 7 – 49.2%, grade 8 – 52.2%). There was little variation by gender (females – 50.5%, males – 46.4%).
- **Over one-third (35.4%)** of all respondents **report that they get seven hours or less of sleep on an average school night.** The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade, especially between grades 7 and 8 (grade 6 – 22.4%, grade 7 – 32.3%, grade 8 – 51.0%) and was higher among females (females – 38.8%, males – 32.0%).

**APPENDIX**

**TO THE REPORT ON THE**

**2011 MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

**FOR THE**

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

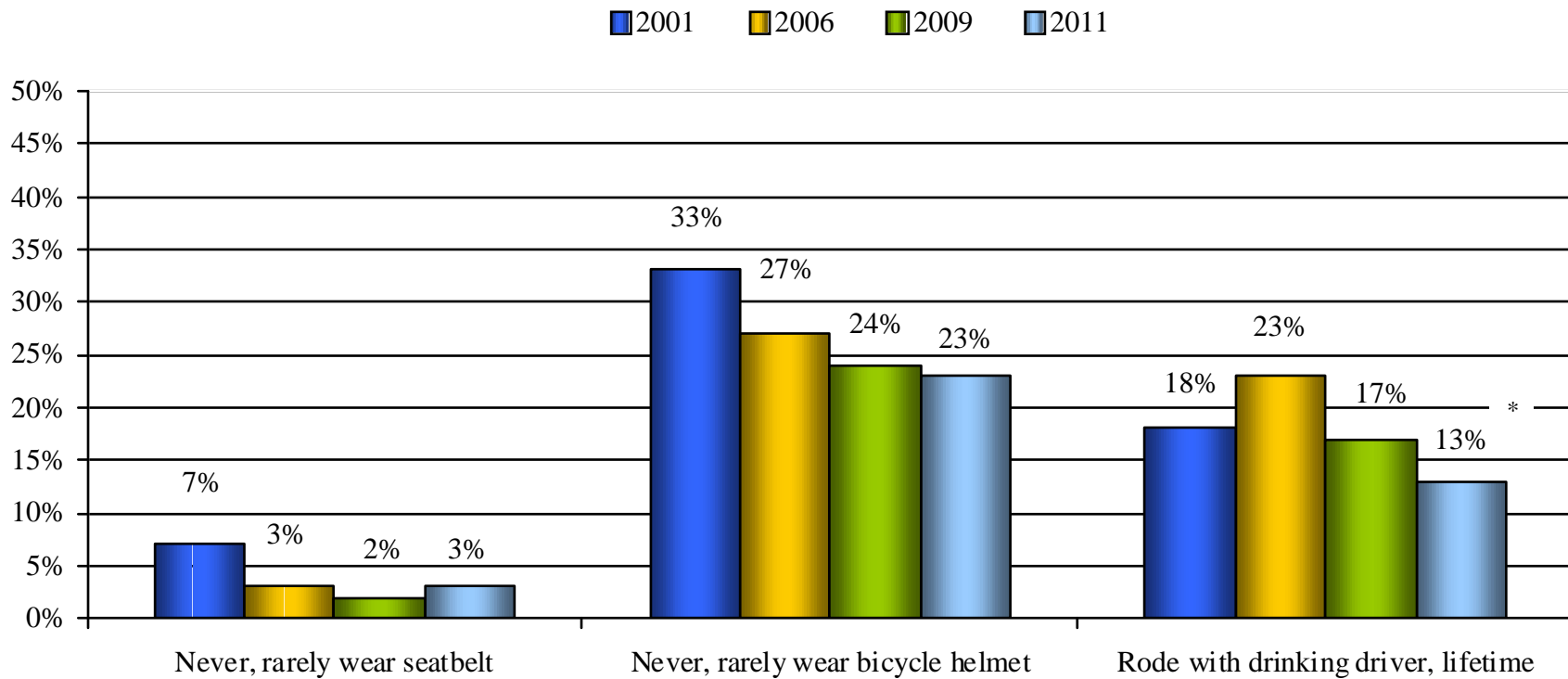
**SELECTED COMPARISONS**

**2001, 2006, 2009, AND 2011**

**FOR GRADES 6, 7 AND 8**

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SAFETY**

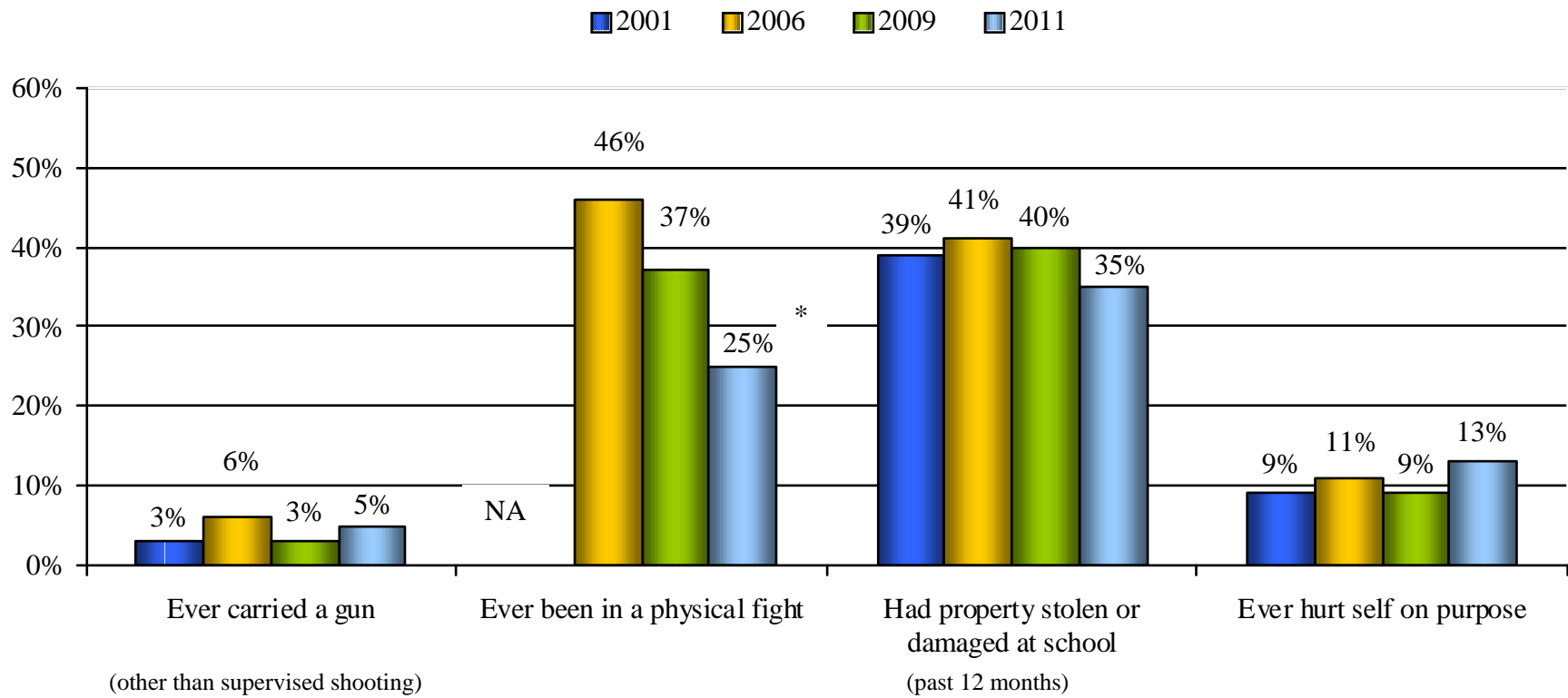


\* past 30 days

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS**

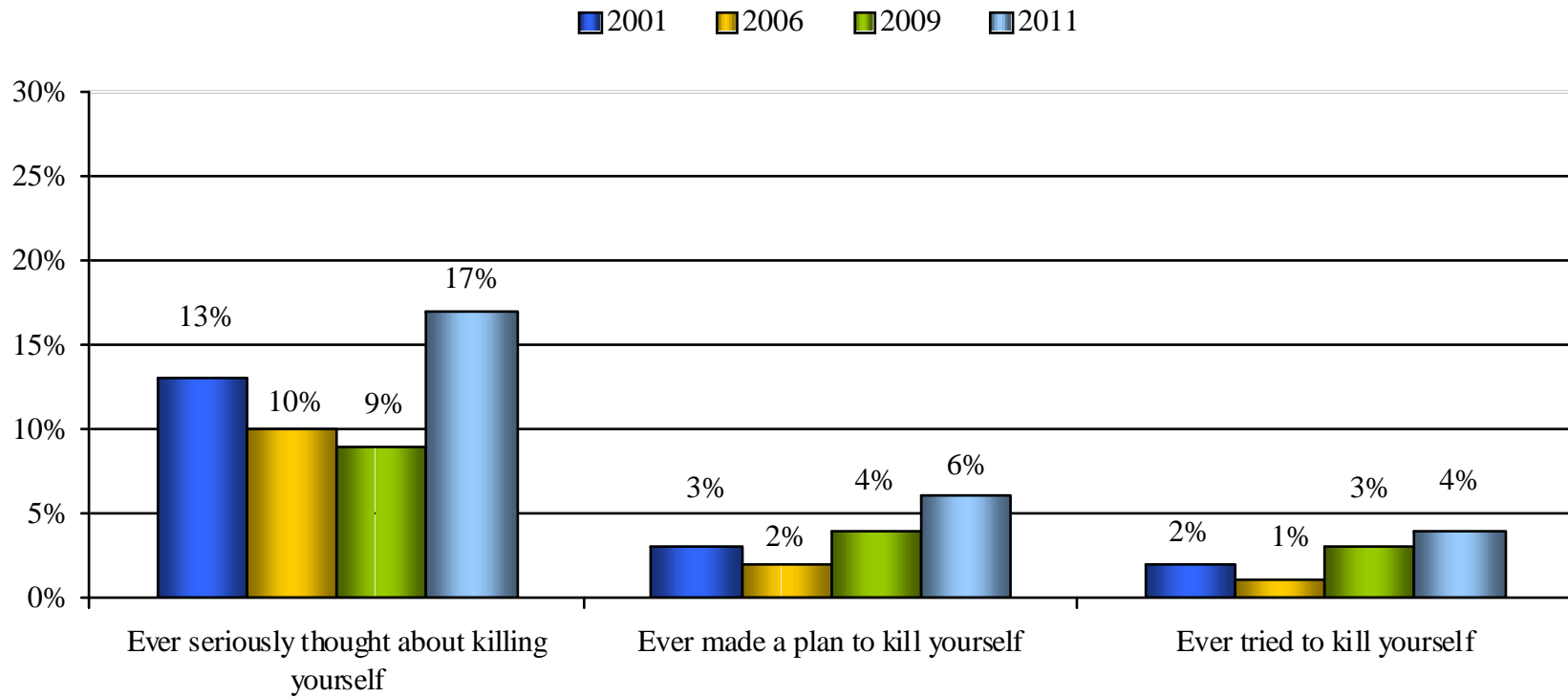
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\* past 12 months

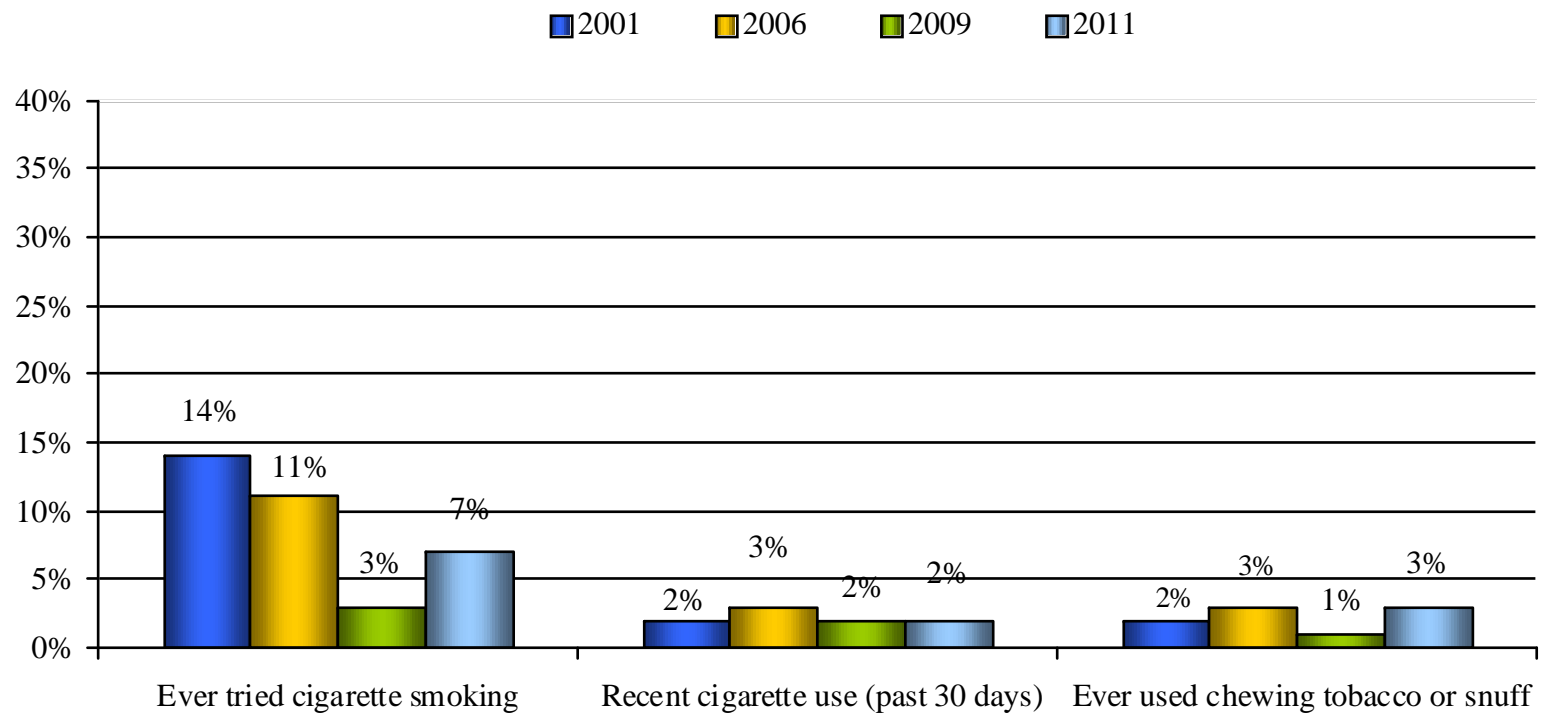
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SUICIDE**



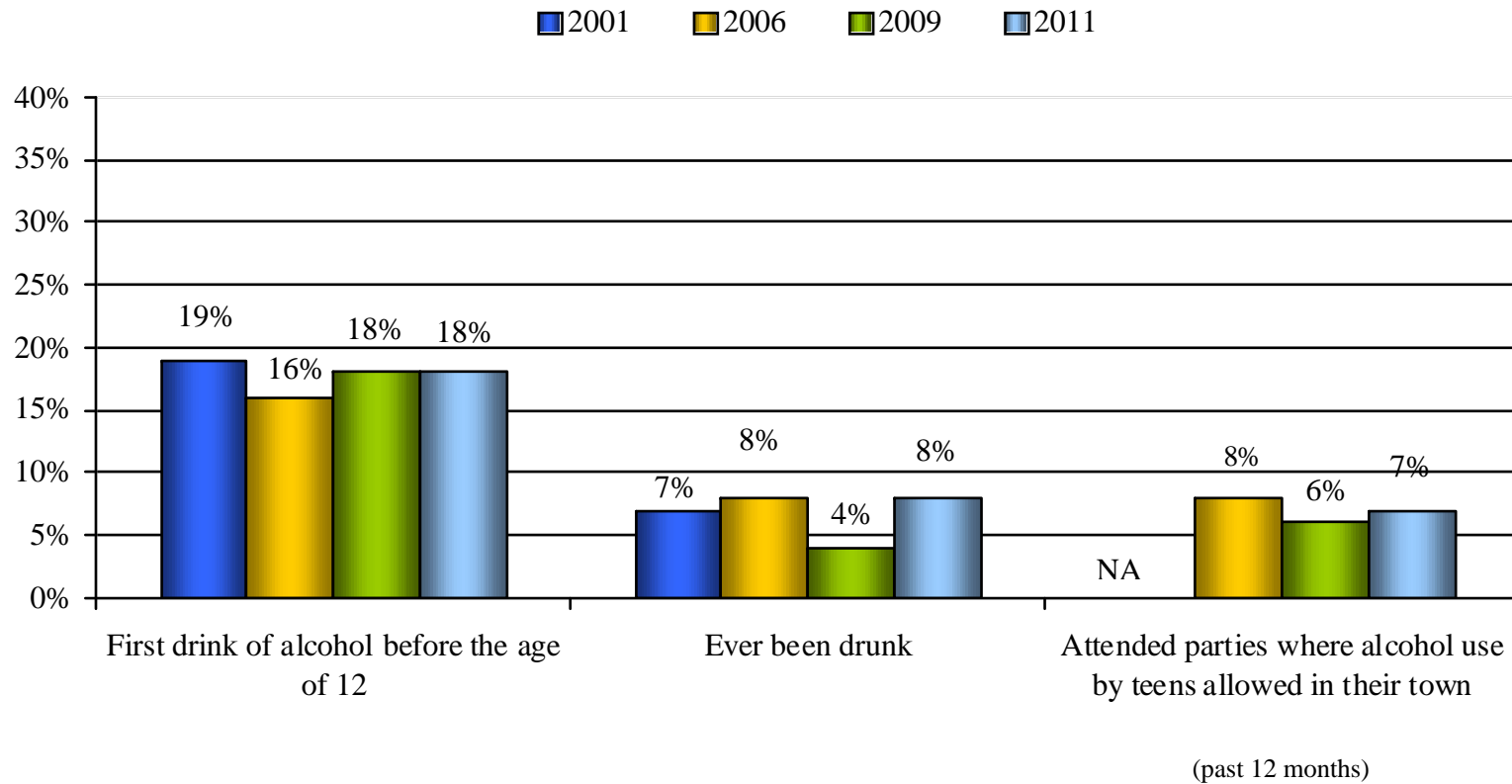
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**TOBACCO USE**



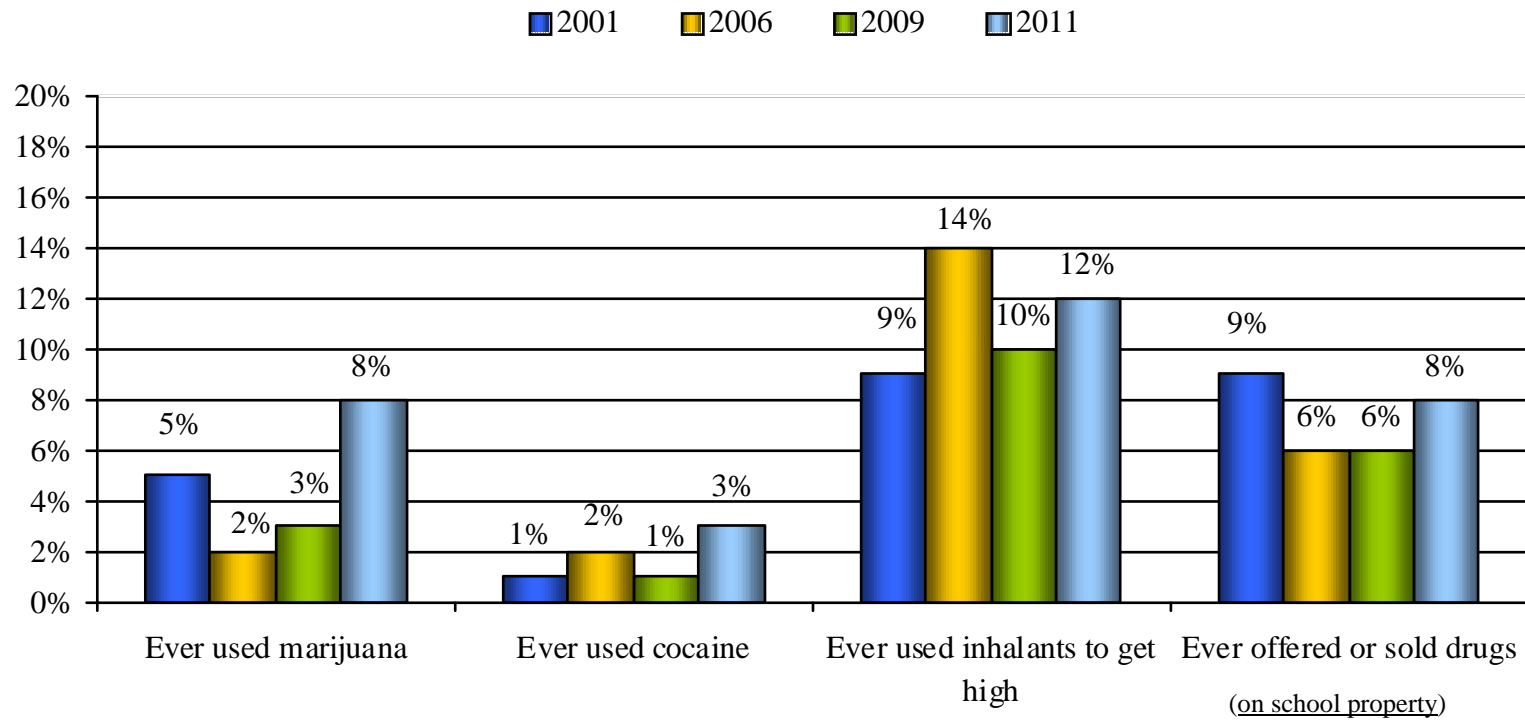
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**ALCOHOL USE**



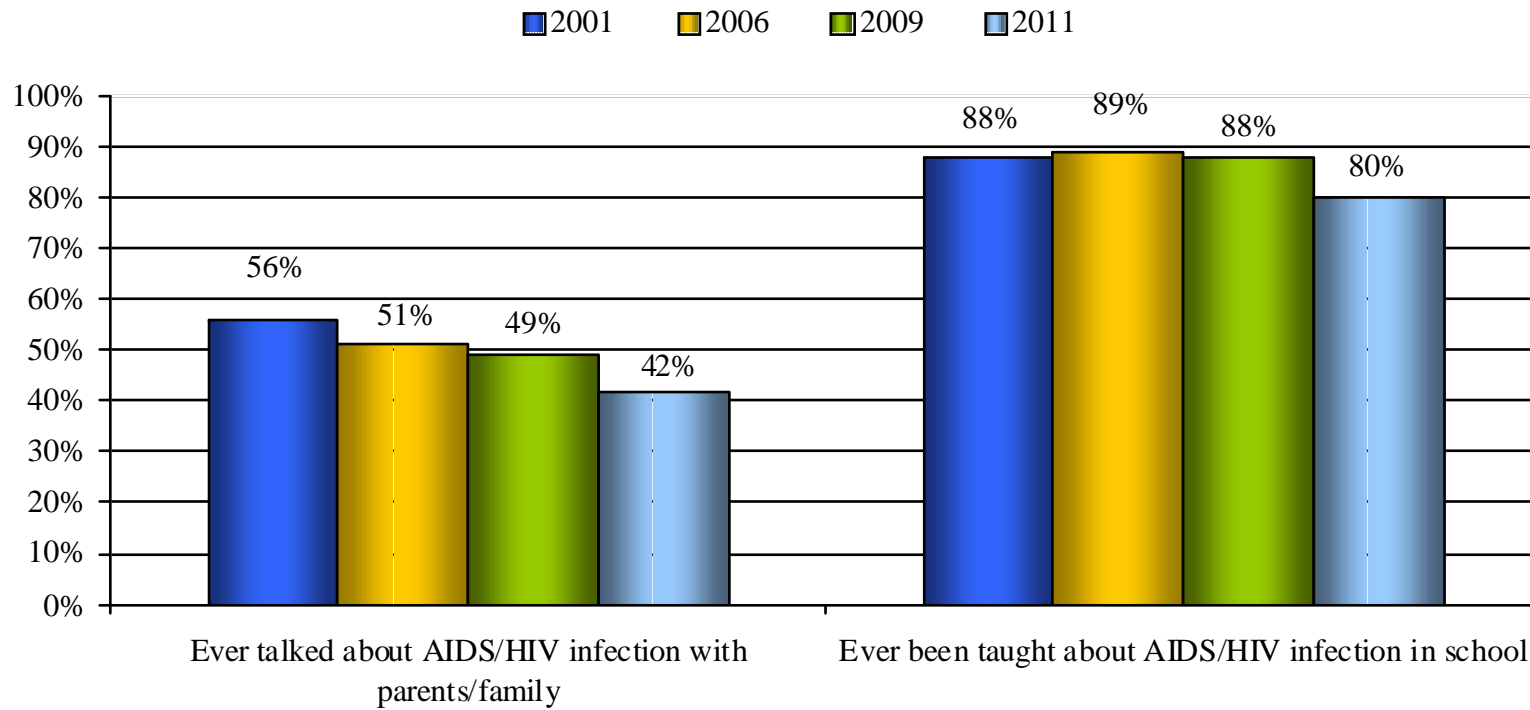
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**ILLEGAL DRUG USE**



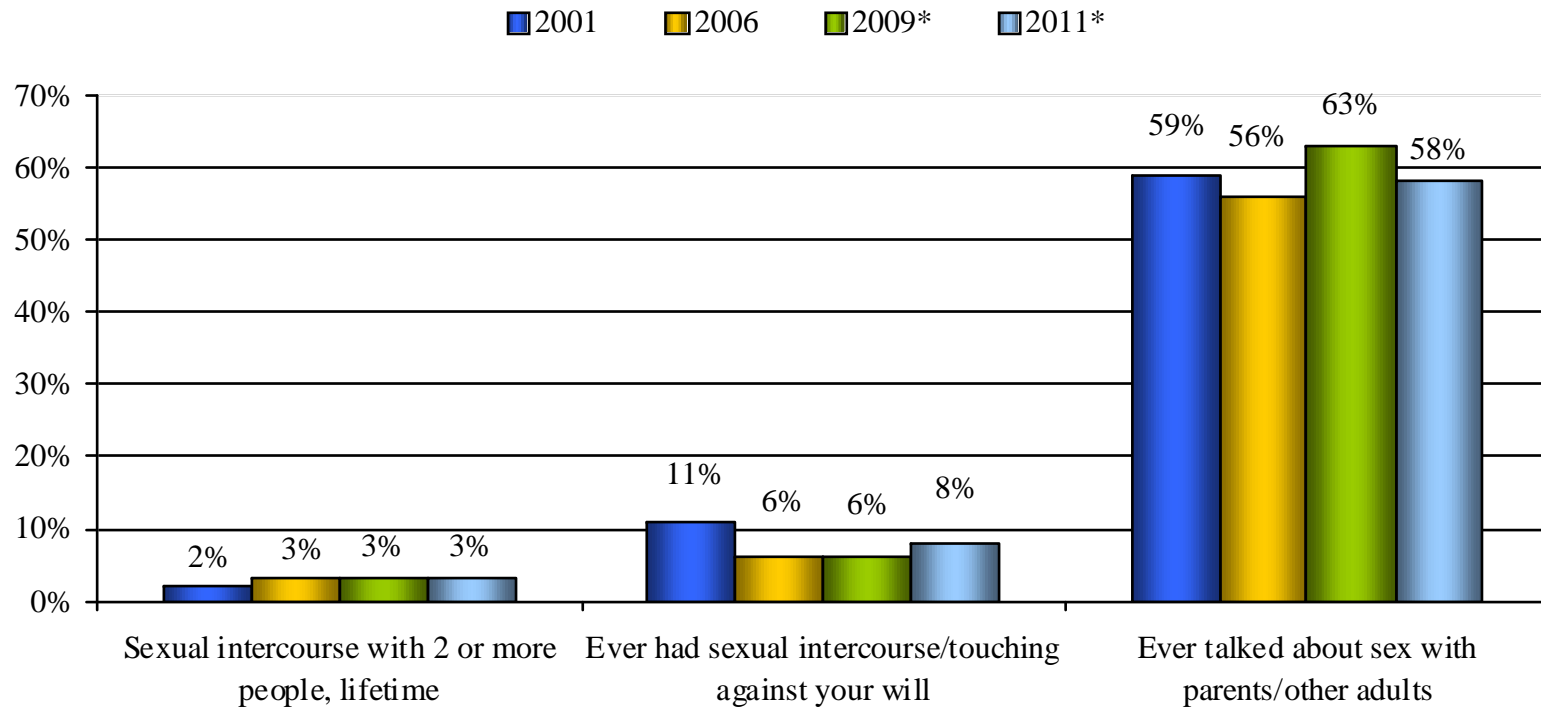
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**HIV/AIDS EDUCATION**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

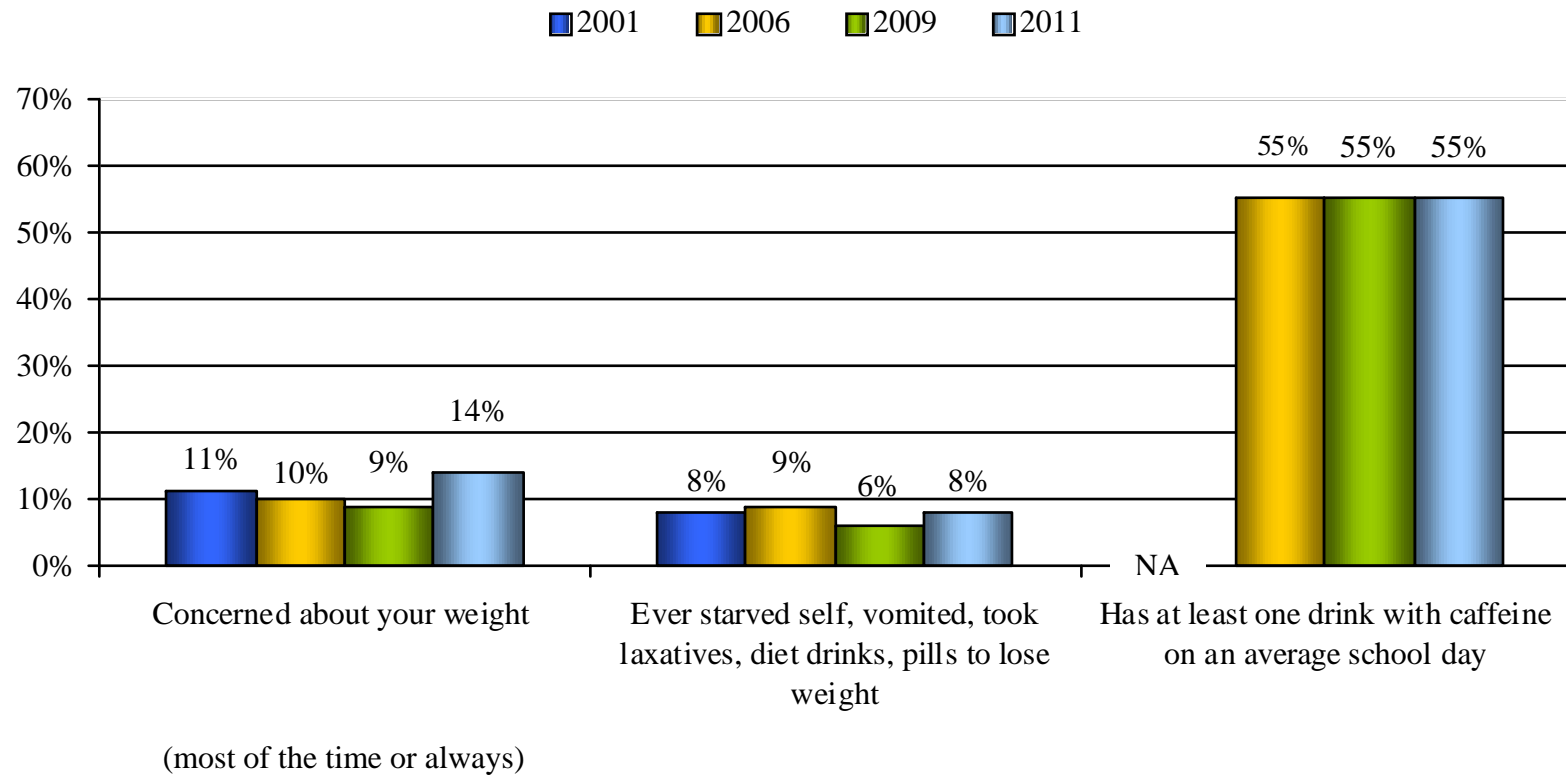
**SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**



\* Grades 7 and 8 only

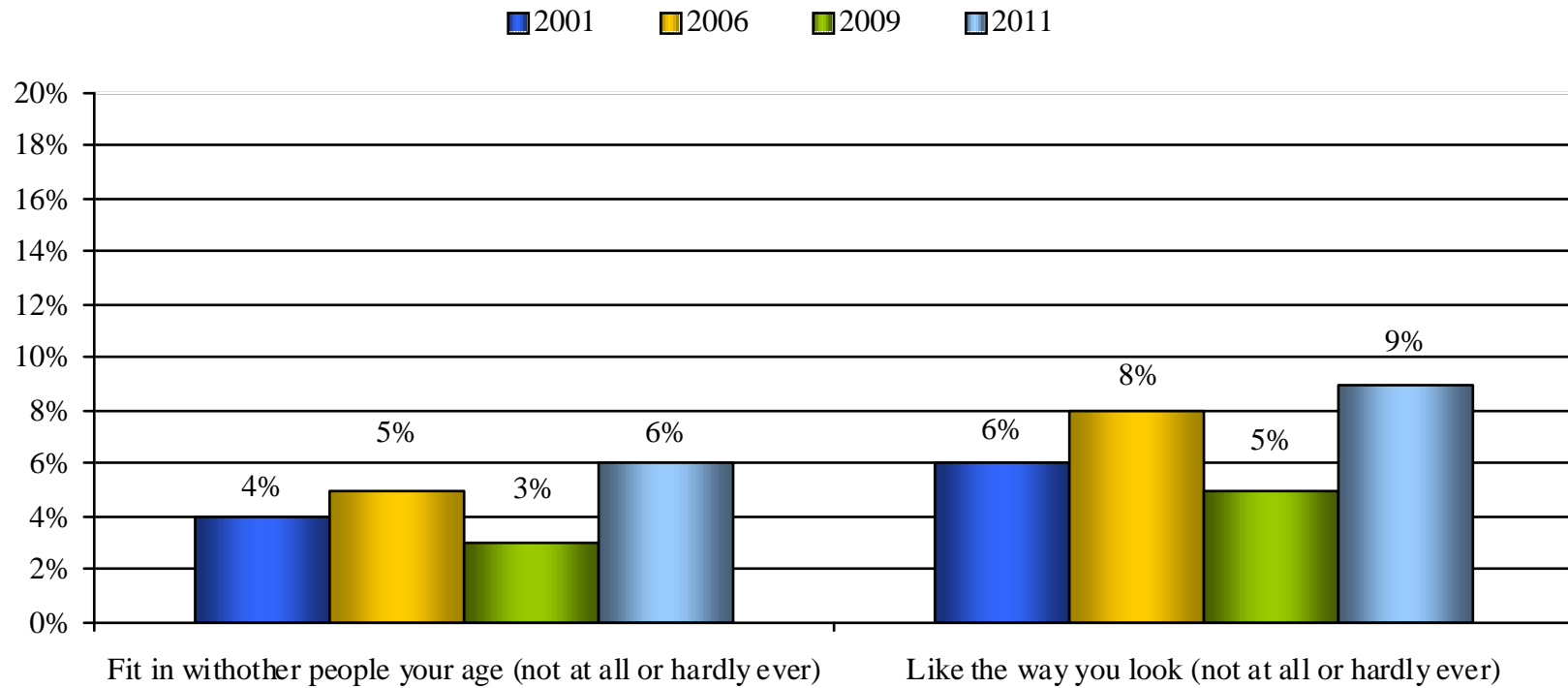
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**DIETARY BEHAVIOR**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SELF-IMAGE**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2011 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

